



## How to make it more efficient. A proposal to computerize the Dizionario

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**How to make it more efficient.**  
**A proposal to computerize the *Dizionario***

**I. Rigidity is the problem**

I am proud indeed of my collaboration to the *Dizionario*. Since I was a student I always dreamed of taking part in one of those good old-fashioned editing enterprises. The dense columns of the *Dictionnaire de droit canon*, the huge volumes of the *Monumenta* made me more secure of my call as a historian. When I was reading them leisurely, just for fun, they brought me physically in touch with the big old men who composed them. They gave me a sense of continuity and of security, in part because their sheer bulk embodied the erudition and sapience they were made of. Science was marching on. The *Dizionario* made my dream true. I no longer feel alone. I am now a part of a long chain of science. The few stones I brought to the knowledge of the Inquisition are now securely preserved as a part of a huge and majestic building.

The problem is that once inserted in this building they cannot be easily removed for use in another context. You can visit a palace, you cannot retail it to your scale, to your needs. You cannot even visit it without inconvenience. No elevator, only staircases. Indexes, references from one entry to another, but to manage them you have to turn a lot of pages and better be in good shape, because the book is heavy. Would it not be possible to preserve the quality and the global character of the *Dizionario*, making it at the same time more manageable? Would it not be possible to make it evolutionary? Is it not a pity to think that within a decade many entries will be outdated because of new studies, some of them generated by the *Dizionario* itself and many more implemented with its help? Let us try and make a list of the main points to be addressed.

- Prevent obsolescence. One of the problems with printed stuff is that once it has been printed you cannot change anything without printing again the whole book. The alternative solution would be to print appendices, and let the reader manage them together with the original work: we know by experience that it is not a workable solution. Conclusion: to fight obsolescence, don't print. Electronic diffusion will allow you to make changes as often as required. If you plan it well, you'll even be able to preserve anterior versions and make them available on demand.

- Help people to read you. The *Dizionario* has been written in Italian. I love Italian. But the number of Italian-reading scientists is fairly short. Don't expect colleagues to read you in another language than their own, or than in the scientific lingua franca of the field - usually, though not always, English. Being myself a bilingual writer (French and Spanish), I know by experience that Spaniards quote what I published in Spanish, French colleagues what I published in French, the rest of the Hispanist community what I publish in Spanish, being still Spanish the lingua franca of international Hispanism. With few exceptions, the non-hispanist (or non-inquisitorial) non-french speaking community does not read me at all. Except when I publish something in English. Let us then translate the *Dizionario*. To English, Spanish and Portuguese at least! Do it. You'll enjoy the task of finding translators prepared to cope with so long a text; and so technical a text, that only real specialists are able to do the job. You'll enjoy the task of finding a publisher. We're short of sponsors just now, and better preserve their failing financial capacity for more urgent tasks - like funding young people's original research. Better do it piecemeal, take volunteers as they come, let them translate what they are interested in, beginning if possible with the most important entries; and insert their translation within the global work. If you manage it well, you'll be able to declare a

preferred language, and the computer will call pages of the same, if they exist, and if not it will call the original Italian version. And for that, renounce printing, its pomps and its works, and stick to e-publishing.

- Help readers create their own reading paths. A dictionary or an encyclopedia are not made for continuous reading. You look for an entry, you read it. If needed you cross to another to get extra information about a term mentioned in the first one you do not know the meaning of. The *Dizionario* has been carefully planned, after well established lines, to make such a reading easier. At the end of every entry, a set of titles suggest further reading of other entries. In this way, the authors have been creating reading paths which embody a global view of the work which they alone possess and give readers guidelines. We already explained the physical problems posed by the rigidity of the printed book to really implement this reading strategy. Electronics, once more, provide a solution. Nevertheless, e-publishing a compact text does not resolve the problem in itself. You must divide the work into shorter pieces to which you remit the reader every time you make him cross from one part to another. Splitting a text is far easier in an encyclopedia than in any other book form, because the text is already structured into independent blocks, not only typographically, but also conceptually. As we'll see later, this feature allows specific publishing strategies in database form which underscore this structure and make it more visible, in a way which would be inconceivable for any other kind of work.

Summing up, we need:

- Electronic publication
- Preserving the formal structure of the entries
- Links between entries through which to cross from an entry to another
- A language marker

To achieve our purposes, two strategies are available. The first one is based on hyperlinks in text form; the second one on a database form. We shall comparatively evaluate them starting from a sample of the *Dizionario* organized in the corresponding way. The reader will not look after graphic perfection. Let him be fundamentally aware of the way the matter is structured. Graphic charts and visual details will come later.

## II. Hypertext

In hypertext, the continuity of the text is preserved. A series of markers, called "beacons" are set to the same. Each one is given a specific name and its position is automatically stored to the computer's memory. This being done, you select text parts, composed of one or various words, and you link each one to one beacon. Various text parts may be linked to the same beacon, but each text part must be linked to one beacon only. This being done, selected text parts are displayed in blue. Clicking on them sends you to the beacon, which carries along with it the neighbouring text. Said in another way, activating the "from" text displays the "to" text.

Fig. I. An Hypertext entry

## An Authentick Narrative

Si tratta di un libretto anonimo settecentesco di 39 pagine che racconta la storia della fondazione e dello sviluppo dell'Inquisizione nei paesi che la ospitavano e narra dei tentativi di introdurla in Inghilterra, Francia, Germania e altrove (ne sono presenti copie alla Bodleian Library di Oxford, alla British Library di Londra, alla Public Library di New York, alla University of Pennsylvania Library e alla University of Minnesota Library). Il tono della sua esposizione rivela un acceso sentimento antiromano, e fa considerare l'opera come una delle pietre miliari nella costruzione della Leggenda Nera della Inquisizione. È tuttavia difficile dire se si tratti di un'opera originale o di una semplice traduzione, tanto più che il testo è sfuggito quasi completamente alla storiografia che si è occupata dell'argomento. La parte finale del volume (An Authentick 1748: 35 sgg.), che riporta la descrizione dell'auto de fe ([Act of Faith](#)) menzionata nel frontespizio, è basata, scrisse l'autore, su di una Narrative pubblicata a Madrid nel 1680. Si tratta senza alcun dubbio di un'allusione all'opera di Joseph Vicente del Olmo, *Relación Historica del Auto General de Fe, que se celebró en Madrid este Año de 1680*, apparsa a Madrid per i tipi di Roque Rico de Miranda e ristampata altre due volte nello stesso anno. L'unica altra fonte citata dall'Authentick Narrative, e sempre di ambito spagnolo, è un *Present State of Spain*, Book IV di M. de Vayrac (An Authentick 1748: 39), da identificare con l'abate Jean de Vayrac e con il suo *Etat present de l'Espagne, ou l'on voit une géographie historique du pays* (3 voll., Paris, A. Caillou [Cailleau?] e Antonin des Hayes, 1718). Di quest'ultima opera però non si conosce alcuna edizione in lingua inglese.

(J. Tedeschi)

*Vedi anche*

[Auto de Fe, Spagna; Leggenda nera dell'Inquisizione spagnola](#)

*Bibliografia*

[An Authentick 1748](#), [Olmo 1680](#), [Vekene 1982-1992](#)

Clicking on "An Authentick 1748" will remit you to:

*An Authentick Narrative of the Original Establishment and Progress of the Inquisition in Italy, Spain, and Portugal. With the Efforts used by the Church of Rome, to Establish this Tyranny in Great Britain, France, Germany, &c. To which is Added, the Ceremonies Used at an Act of Faith, or Execution of the Inquisition*, London, Printed for the Author, and sold by the Booksellers in Town and Country, 1748, 39 p.

Artola, Miguel, *La España de Fernando VII*, Madrid, Espasa Calpe, 1999.

Bethencourt, Francisco, "Declínio e extinção do Santo Ofício", *Revista de História Económica e Social*, 1987, 20, pp. 77-85.

Bethencourt, Francisco, *História das Inquisições. Portugal, Espanha e Itália, Lisboa, Círculo de Leitores*, 1994, trad. francese: *L'Inquisition à l'époque moderne. Espagne, Portugal, Italie, XVe-XIXe siècle*. Paris, Fayard, 1995; trad. spagnola: *La Inquisición en la época moderna: España, Portugal, e Italia, siglos XV-XIX*. Madrid, Akal, 1997; trad. inglese rivista: *The Inquisition. A Global History, 1478-1834*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Clicking on "Act of faith" remits you to:

### **Auto de Fe, Spagna**

Autodafé, termine derivante dal portoghese auto da fé più che dallo spagnolo auto de fe, significa atto di fede ed è l'espressione più solenne e spettacolare dell'attività giudiziaria e di ammaestramento religioso dell'Inquisizione o Sant'Uffizio spagnolo, di cui diviene la ritualità maggiore. È una solenne dimostrazione pubblica di appartenenza alla religione cristiana, ma diviene anche la riduzione in breve di un pellegrinaggio di fede: la popolazione viene chiamata a parteciparvi con la promessa di speciali indulgenze, simili a quelle ottenute dai pellegrini, dopo faticosi viaggi in Terra Santa, a Roma o a Santiago di Compostela. La sua celebrazione completa l'attività correzionale dell'Inquisizione, che inizia nel foro interno della coscienza per contrastare l'eresia e riportare il reo al corretto vivere cristiano e, se la colpa è pubblica, si conclude in quello esterno penale della sanzione e della penitenza pubblica, al cui momento finale si colloca l'autodafé, che riequilibra, nella pubblicità della punizione, il segreto di cui si ammantava il processo inquisitorio...

And back again, and so on as long as you please.

The good part of this proceeding is that it preserves the continuity of the text. You are reading the original work, as it was graphically composed by its author, exactly as if you were reading the book. The difference is that you can "navigate" from one part to another related one with one click. It saves time, provides alternative reading paths, the use of which makes possible to overcome the shortcomings of serial reading and to create unexpected conceptual associations. The "vedi anche" set at the bottom of the entry must be preserved although many of the labels of which it is composed appear as blue text within the body of the entry; for the sake of the entries which do not; and also to give a global view of the related entries and let the reader choose his own itinerary in function of the whole set of offered options and not only as a one-step process. You are free to change part of the text, to append new entries, documents and pictures, so long as you create the relevant links to the same.

The problem with hypertext is that it is cumbersome to organize. Recent packages make the process easier. Nevertheless the administrator of the system must physically create every link, one by one. Creating a link only can be done in various steps. Any change must be done manually, one after the other, in a various steps process also. Last but not least, readers and administrators cannot program optional requests. Each beacon is linked to one text piece, and to one piece only. Such a lack of versatility makes almost impossible to offer alternative reading paths including various versions of the same entry, different either in date or in language. The other option is a database.

### **III. Database**

#### *a) Full standard display*

A standard entry of a data base version of the *Dizionario* could be as follows:

Fig. 1. Full standard display of an entry

[Insert Publish\_01]

## Dizionario – Database version – A standard view of an entry

[illegible]

Legend:

A: Entry

B: Related entries

C: Service zone

D: Related pictures

E: Related documents

F: Related Bibliography

1: Title of the entry

2: Text of the entry

3: Author(s)

4: Dates (beginning - end) of validity of the entry

5: Language of the entry

6: identifiers of related entries

7: record identifier

Each *Dizionario* entry is a specific record. The systems marks each record with a specific identifier (8), which in fact becomes the entry identifier. We shall latter see the use of it.

Each entry is composed of the entry proper (A), of a set of related entries (B), a set of related pictures (D), a set of related bibliographical references (E). All that strictly reproduces the structure of a *Dizzionario* entry. You can enrich the entry, adding for instance documents (E).

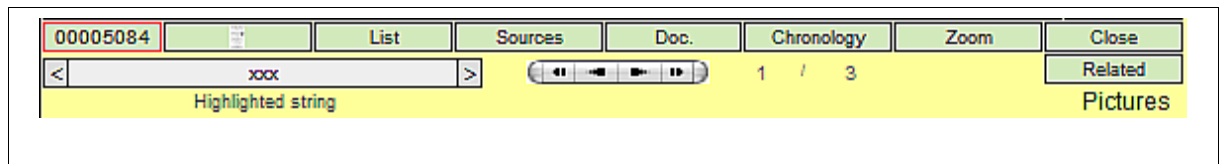
(A) zone shows the full text of the entry; (B), (D), (E) and (F) only display summaries of related entries. Not one. Various. The user chooses. Clicking anyone of the triggers (•) displays the content of the related entry. Clicking the trigger of the first line of (B) zone in the present example would change the "An Authentick Narrative" entry for the "Auto de Fe, Spagna" one. We'll see within little what would happen if you click a trigger of the Pictures (D) zone.

(A) zone displays a variety of fields which make possible a variety of queries: the title of the entry (1), the text of the same (it can be made searchable) (2), the name of the author (3), a set of keywords (4), the dates of validity of the entry content (beginning and end date) (5), the language of the entry (6). In a complete version, the language marker would be the starting point of a routine which would select a specific preferred language. An entry in another language would in fact be another record of the database. In a multi-lingual version, selection of entries, either through manual queries or through triggers, would just include another condition, in the form of a specific language marker. (I) trigger calls all the entries written by the author mentioned in the current one. (o) trigger brings back to the original entry after crossing to another one through a (B) trigger.

*b) Tools zone*

(C) zone holds a set of tools which make easier handling the selected data.

Fig. 2. Tools zone



The "Highlighted string" zone allows the user to define a string of characters to be highlighted within the selected text (A2) in every selected entries. In the present example, the selected string is "xxx". A couple of triggers, on both sides of the field make possible navigation within the found occurrences. This feature is usual in text handling programs and it is probably familiar to the reader.

On the right side of the Highlighting tool features a navigation tool. It displays on demand the next selected entry (>), the previous one (<), the first one (<|) or the last selected one (|>). Numbers on the right side show the rank of the displayed entry within the set of selected entries (in that case, the first out of three).

The first piece on the left of the upper line is the identifier of the current record. All other pieces are triggers, through which various routines can be launched. The first of those would display a little vignette if the entry is linked with a picture. Clicking the vignette displays the picture (see next section). "List" displays a list of selected entries and let the user select the one he chooses fully to display. "Sources" activates the content of the "Sources" table, "Doc." the content of the "Documents" table. "Chronology" orders chronologically the selected entries. Zoom displays their content with a bigger characters set. "Close" closes the system. "Related" is not for the usual reader. It displays a service layout which lets the administrator take a global view of the related entries linked to the current one. "Pictures" has nothing to do with tools. It is the title of the next zone. Given the limits of the Window's "Capture" tool, we were unable to let it out when selecting the picture of our computer's screen to be copied to our text.

### *c) Enhancing the Dizzionario. Pictures.*

The database form makes possible enhancing the content of the Dizzionario, not only by including translated entries, but also by progressively adding more information or enhancing already existing information. We already mentioned the introduction into our sample of a "Document" zone to which any kind of related text documents can be attached. We shall nevertheless explain this side of the database format by using another and more spectacular example, that of an enhanced picture.

Fig. 3. Display of a picture entry

[Insert Publish\_02]



## Dizionario – Database version – A picture entry

|  |                    |      |   |
|--|--------------------|------|---|
|  | Auto de Fe, Spagna | 1481 | M. S. Messana<br>Spain, ritual<br>Picture |
| © CNRS / SN PIAF / DSI   |                    |      |   |
| Berruguete (Pedro), San Domenico presiede un tribunale dell'Inquisizione (1490)  |                    |      |   |
|  |                    |      |   |
| Auto da fé, termine derivante dal portoghese auto da fé più che dallo spagnolo auto de fe, significa atto di fede ed è l'espressione più solenne e spettacolare dell'attività giudiziaria e di ammaestramento religioso dell'inquisizione o Sant'Uffizio spagnolo, di cui diviene la rituale maggiore. È una solenne dimostrazione pubblica di appartenenza alla religione cristiana, ma diviene anche la riduzione in indulgenze, simili a quelle ottenute dai pellegrini, dopo faticosi viaggi in Terra Santa, a Roma o a Santiago di Compostela. La sua celebrazione completa l'attività correttoriale dell'inquisizione, che inizia nel foro interno della coscienza per contrastare l'eresia e riportare il reo al corretto vivere cristiano e, se la colpa è pubblica, si conclude in quello esterno penale della sanzione e della pena pubblica, al cui momento finale si colloca l'autodafé, che riequilibra, nella pubblicità della punizione, il segreto di cui si ammanta il processo inquisitoriale.   |                    |      |   |
| Il rito  |                    |      |   |
| In tutti i territori in cui si esercita la sovranità spagnola, la sua ritualità è codificata in norme molto simili fra loro: una solenne cerimonia chiude periodicamente l'attività inquisitoriale, rende pubbliche le sentenze e le pene comminate nei processi, indica attraverso una complessa simbologia la reinmissione dei rei pentiti nel consenso sociale ovvero la loro definitiva esclusione dalla comunità. La cerimonia assolve anche a una funzione dottrinale, definendo pubblicamente come reali le false dottrine e le azioni che hanno dato scandalo; infine svolge un'azione pedagogica, mostrando, nell'esito dei processi e nelle pene inflitte, quanto sia disastroso infrangere le regole dettate dalla Chiesa e dal Sant'Ufficio.   |                    |      |   |
| L'organizzazione   |                    |      |   |
| L'autodafé dipende dagli inquisitori, che periodicamente, con scadenza quasi annuale (ma in alcuni casi anche due volte l'anno), chiudono la loro attività giudiziaria celebrandolo pubblicamente o privatamente, per più condannati o per uno solo e a porte chiuse. Quando si celebra l'autodafé pubblico, gli inquisitori chiamano il popolo tutto a parteciparvi. La sua preparazione si attua in diverse fasi: la cerimonia è proposta dai tribunali distrettuali al Consiglio della Suprema e Generale Inquisizione di Madrid, che l'autorizza, dopo aver revisionato i processi che vi confluiranno. La data è scelta in base alle festività dei santi patroni della città o di quelli più accreditati nel santorale inquisitoriale. Per il resto, si preferisce celebrarlo di domenica, che da giorno festivo diventa penitenziale: non vi si possono celebrare messe cantate o predicare, né portare armi. I cicli liturgici vengono rispettati ove è possibile, organizzando a volte l'autodafé in quaresima o in Avvento, tempi penitenziali per eccellenza, ma più spesso si preferiscono i mesi estivi, per ovvie ragioni meteorologiche. In Spagna si scelgono talvolta la |                    |      |   |

The reader selects the picture he wants through one of the triggers of the (D) zone of the full standard display. Related pictures are displayed to a special layout. The entry zone is somewhat reduced and other zones are suppressed to make room for the picture. The title and the artist's name feature above the picture in a special field. Once the picture has been seen, the user returns to the full standard display through the "Main" trigger, or to a list of selected entries to activate another such entry through the "List" trigger.

All intelligent readers probably noticed that the two green lines which cross the picture are not Berruguete's, but an enhancement of ours. A scientific enhancement, not an artistic one. As an expert in Inquisition, we underscore the structure of the painting, and explain its historical meaning. We add a special comment of ours to a specific field, under the picture.

"The painting was ordered by Torquemada. It is organized along two axis, starting from the convict. [A] is the way of repentance, leading to forgiveness (see Saint Dominic's gesture; Justice is sleeping just under the saint); [B] is the way of obstinacy, leading to death. Eliciting from the convict a public act of repentance, at the last moment, just before the reading of the death sentence, repentance immediately followed by the inquisitor's pardon, was the most sought after effect of Spanish inquisitorial practice."

Two versions of the same painting can of course be provided: with and without historical enhancement.

We shall not further comment the many possibilities which the database standard makes possible. Those few examples are suggestive enough. Perusing any well-thought Internet portal will undoubtedly suggest more possibilities. They are potentially unlimited.

### **Final considerations**

This paper must be read as a modest proposal. The *Dizionario* must be transferred to a true electronic edition. Of that we are convinced, for the reasons we adduced in part One. Must it be a database or an hypertext, on that point we dare not decide. We have a clear preference for the database form, in that particular case of a previously structured text in which data must be strongly articulated to preserve the essence of the work, but pros and cons must be carefully weighted before deciding. A combination of both, a database for more scientific purposes, a hypertext for current use, may also be considered.

The sample which we built for exploration and demonstration purposes has been made using FileMaker® package; because we know it well; because we believe that its flexibility makes it one of the few really useful database package for scientific purposes; because many other historians agree with us on these points. But may be that for long-term preservation of the data or for internet publishing it is not the best choice. The package does not matter in itself. What matters is the structure of the database, and that structure can be transposed to any other package... presenting the same possibilities as FileMaker. There again pros and cons must be carefully weighted and trials made before deciding. The possibility of a runtime edition under FileMaker must also be considered.

E-publishing, and more specifically in database form, opens unlimited potentialities. Nevertheless, the counterpart of flexibility is a firm and steady management. An open and flexible database cannot be expected to run smoothly on invisible rails, constrained by an implacable internal logic. Any E-edition of the *Dizionario* must be firmly piloted by a permanent steering comity. This permanent and long term structure would be

responsible for the preservation of the *Dizionario* - as well from the scientific point of view as from the technical point of view -; for implementing necessary changes, approving proposals, fomenting initiatives. The *Dizionario* has been produced by a team based at the Scuola Normale Superiore de Pisa. I suggest that the Comity should be a continuation of that team, and comprise a number of Scuola Normale students. I know by experience that this kind of activity, in with conceptual aspects are closely related to practical technical questions, is one of the most formative task possible.

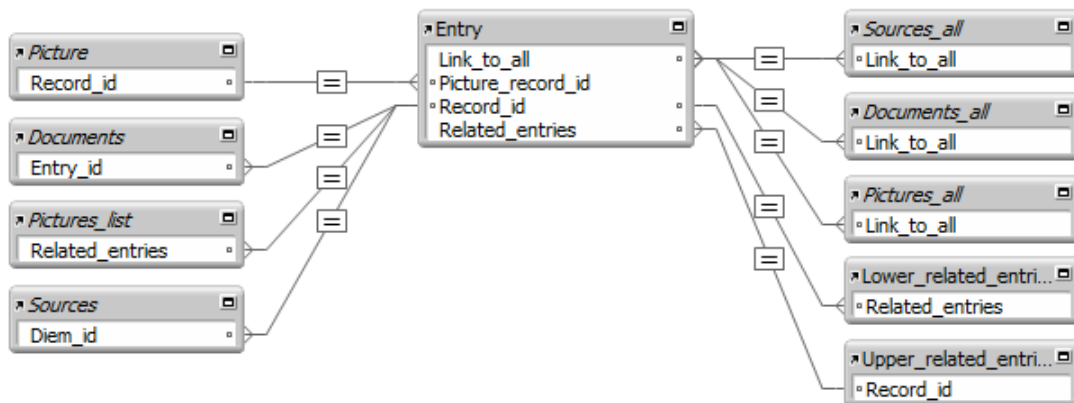
A last remark. Transferring the *Dizionario* to a database or an hypertext is not so time-consuming a it looks. The way in which the printed work was well planned from the beginning makes it easy.

Jean Pierre Dedieu

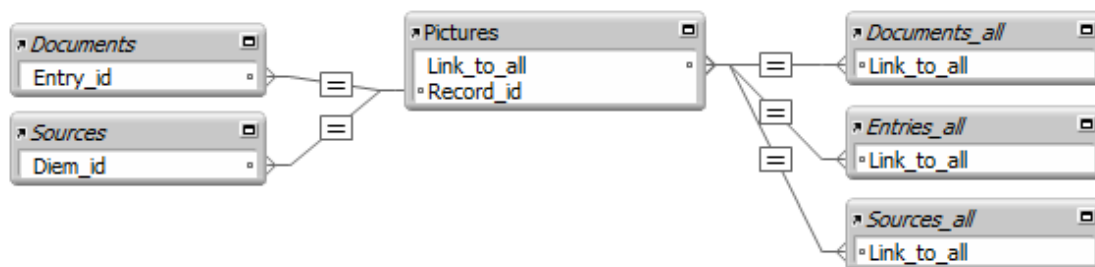
CNRS / LARHRA / Université de Lyon

## Appendix. Global structure of the database

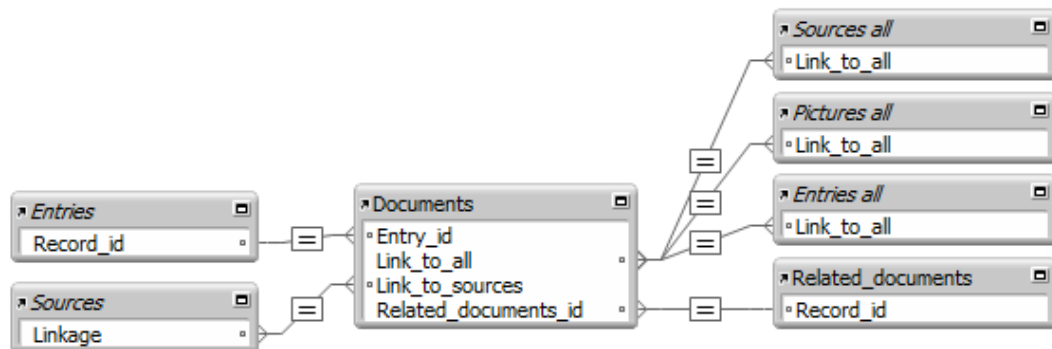
Links from the Entry table:



Links from the Pictures table:



Links from the Documents table:



Links from the Source table:

